

Acute Pain

Opioids Are Not Always the Answer

What is Acute Pain?

Pain that has been bothering you for less than 3 months.

Low Back Pain



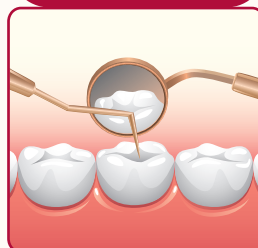
- Muscle strain
- Herniated disc
- Sciatica

Trauma or Injury



- Sprained joint
- Broken bone
- Pulled muscle
- Bruising

Dental Procedures



- Tooth removal
- Root canal
- Cavity filling
- Infection

Surgery



- Abdominal surgery
- Neurosurgery
- Orthopedic surgery

Opioids are Not the First Choice for Most Types of Acute Pain.

There are major risks from using opioids, including accidental drug poisoning or overdose and dependence or addiction. Side effects from opioids like drowsiness and constipation can keep you from enjoying your favorite activities.

Opioids should only be taken when needed for severe pain. Use the lowest helpful dosage.

Ask your provider about non-opioid treatments. These can be used successfully to reduce pain and have fewer side effects than opioids.

What are Opioids?

- Hydrocodone (Vicodin®, Lortab®)
- Oxycodone (Percocet®, Oxycontin®)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid®)
- Morphine (MS Contin®, Kadian®)
- Methadone (Dolophine®)
- Fentanyl (Duragesic®)



Do I Need an Opioid?

Why Do I Have Pain?	Do I Need an Opioid?	What Else Can I Do for My Pain?
Low back pain • Muscle strain • Herniated disc • Sciatica	No	Self-care: Ice packs, heating pad or hot bath, walking, stretching, weight loss, in some cases physical therapy. Medication: Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are more effective than opioids. Acute low back pain will improve with time no matter which medicines are used.
Trauma/injury • Muscle pull • Joint sprain • Broken bone • Bruising	No	Self-care: Ice packs, heating pad or hot bath, elevation of injured limb, rest, stretching. Medication: Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and acetaminophen are effective. Topical treatments may help the pain as much as oral medicines. Rest, ice/heat, massage, and stretching may help the pain.
Dental pain • Tooth pulled • Infection • Filling/crown • Root canal	No	Self-care: Rinse mouth with warm water; use cold compress to outside of cheek if pain is from trauma to a tooth. Medication: Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and acetaminophen are effective.
Surgery • Abdominal surgery • Neurosurgery • Orthopedic surgery	Maybe	Self-care: Will depend on the type of surgery. Medication: Talk to your health care team about the options available for pain after you have surgery. In some cases, acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs may be used. A short course of an opioid may also be used. If opioids are prescribed, they should only be used as needed and in most cases for less than 5 days.



Over-the-Counter (OTC) Pain Medications*

1. Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

- Ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®)
- Naproxen (Aleve®)

2. Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

***Caution:** You should not take two similar drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen sodium together. Do not exceed the recommended dosage of a medication without consulting your health care provider.

Please call _____ with any questions or concerns.

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text - 838255